

Brian Buck, John Childress, Robert Kilcourse, Kody McMichael, Marisa Peters, Matthew Raively, Deborah Robinson, Karen Sabater, Donald Smith, Richard Smith, Marcus Smith, Ayana Thomas, Jessica Welch, George Williams, and Nylan Wolcott.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 27, 1999

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, last week I was not able to be present for rollcall votes 308–334. Had I been present, I would have voted the following way: 308—"yea"; 309—"yea"; 310—"yea"; 311—"yea"; 312—"yea"; 313—"no"; 314—"no"; 315—"no"; 316—"yea"; 317—"yea"; 318—"yea"; 319—"yea"; 320—"no"; 321—"yea"; 322—"yea"; 323—"yea"; 324—"no"; 325—"yea"; 326—"yea"; 327—"yea"; 328—"yea"; 329—"yea"; 330—"no"; 331—"yea"; 332—"yea"; 333—"no"; 334—"yea."

RECOGNIZING BISHOP MACRAM MAX GASSIS

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 27, 1999

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I am submitting for the RECORD an article from the recent Washington Watch by the Family Research Council about Bishop Macram Max Gassis, a Roman Catholic bishop from Sudan. Over the years, Bishop Macram has tirelessly fought for justice for his people—the people of Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains who have suffered and died in great numbers during the war that has plagued the country for the past fifteen years.

Over 2 million people have died in Sudan—more than in Rwanda, Kosovo, Somalia and Bosnia combined. They often feel they are forgotten by the world.

Bishop Macram reminds us that these men, women and children must not be forgotten. He reminds us of their brave spirit, their hope in the midst of suffering and their quest for justice. He reminds us of our responsibility to speak out, take action and do what we can to help the people of Sudan.

I have been privileged to know Bishop Macram over the years.

A GENTLE GIANT OF FAITH

(By Bill Saunders)

In Sudan, just south of Egypt, where the church traces its roots to Apostolic times, a radical Islamic government is waging war on its own citizens—torturing and murdering Christians. In this war, the government regularly bombs innocent civilians, destroys their food supplies, poisons their only sources of clean water, desecrates their churches, supports the taking of their children as slaves, and forces non-Arab, non-Muslim people into refugee camps where they must convert to Islam or starve.

For years, the world has done little to help. The U.N. has allowed the Sudanese government to dictate where it can provide relief (thus, the most needy people starve).

Until recently, the U.S. focused little diplomatic effort on the problem, despite Sudan's strategic position as a bridge between black Africa and the Middle East, and despite the Sudanese government's avowed aim of exporting radical Islam throughout the world. Only recently, the House of Representatives passed a stinging resolution, finally and fairly condemning these practices by the Sudanese government. Senator Sam Brownback has introduced a similar resolution in the Senate but it remains to be seen whether the House will vote to take substantive action.

In the midst of this man-made hell on earth, one man stands out as he fights for justice. That man is Catholic Bishop Macram Max Gassis. Born in Sudan of ethnically mixed parents and educated in England, Italy, and the United States, the Bishop is an articulate modern-day prophet. The only Sudanese bishop born in the northern (Arab) part of the country, he is fluent in the Arabic language and understands those in the North who see all blacks as "slaves" and all Christians as "infidels".

Unlike so many others, he refuses to pretend the horror does not exist. He has spoken out before the European Parliament, the U.S. Congress, and the United Nations Human Rights Commission. He travels regularly to the West, particularly to the United States, to expose the evil in his country. His witness has inspired many, from Senator Brownback to Congressman Frank Wolf. He, like St. Paul, has spoken the truth to kings and governors.

In Sudan, the people revere Bishop Gassis for his courage. The government, angry that he has called it to account, has branded him a criminal. Whenever he travels back to his country, he risks being captured and possibly executed.

Undaunted, he returns to his diocese because his people need him. His presence inspires them. Every time he returns, he smuggles desperately needed supplies through enemy lines. In many areas, he is the only one providing assistance.

Despite his tribulations, the Bishop remains a gentle man, firmly committed to Christ. He has a special affection for children, particularly those children who were formerly enslaved, and is raising several hundred of them, orphaned by the raiders who abducted them. These children need food, clothing, shelter, education, and counseling, and he provides it. Because of this expression of Christian love, the children are joyful and, like Bishop Gassis, full of hope.

Christianity in Sudan, its ancestral home, is alive and growing. The church, through heroes like Bishop Gassis, refuses to be silenced. As he says, "though we in Sudan are being crucified, after every crucifixion, there comes a resurrection."

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. JACK KINGSTON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2561) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes:

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Chairman, the House Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for FY00 provides an extremely important allocation

of resources in a serious effort to improve critical shortcomings affecting the readiness of our armed forces. This bill meets the budget authority and outlay limits set in the Committee's 302(b) allocation, provides a critical \$15.5 billion increase over appropriations in FY99, and provides \$2.8 billion above the President's request. This legislation goes a long way to address critical readiness, recruitment, retention, operational maintenance, and quality of life needs that are so important for our military. However, I am concerned about one aspect of the legislation's strategy, cutting programmed funding for the initial production of the Air Force's number one development priority, the F-22, Raptor.

We expect our military to remain the world's best, head and shoulders above any potential aggressor. We demand that our armed forces reign supreme in personnel, training, professionalism, and equipment. We do not want parity with our enemies, we demand superiority. We do not want to win conflicts by attrition but by overwhelming our foes. A most critical aspect of our superiority is our ability to achieve and maintain air superiority in any conflict. Furthermore, today Americans have grown to expect to win conflicts with minimal or even no casualties. The best trained pilots in the most advanced aircraft are the great enabler in any conflict whether to protect our Navy, or to allow the introduction and free maneuver of our ground forces. Air superiority is vital. Experience in modern warfare has continued to reflect the importance of this from success in World War II to operations during Desert Storm and Operation Allied Force.

The F-22 aircraft is being produced to replace the F-15 fighter and to accomplish its air superiority mission beginning in 2005. The F-15 currently represents 1960's technology and the aging fleet will average 26 years old when the F-22 is scheduled to be operational. Today's F-15's have served our country well, but in the future our pilots will be at risk. Its capabilities today are at parity with the Russian SU-27, MIG-29 and by 2005 will be at a disadvantage facing the Russian SU-35 or the French Rafael, and the European Fighter 2000 aircraft that will be available on the world market. Additionally, the surface to air missile threat continues to advance world wide. Today the SA-10 and SA-12 missile availability pose a threat to the F-15. Proliferation of SA-10 and SA-12 capability has increased from four countries in 1985 to fourteen in 1995 and an estimated 22 by 2005. The F-22 will have the capability to counter the surface to air missile threat through stealth technology, supercruise capability that will significantly reduce missile engagement opportunity, maneuverability and unequalled pilot awareness.

The F-22 aircraft does bear costs, \$19 billion has been invested to date, but the cost and advanced technology provide significant efficiencies and long term savings. The F-22 will reduce by half the number of maintenance personnel for each aircraft. It is expected to have 30 percent reduction in direct operations and sustainment costs per squadron per year when compared to the F-15. A quicker combat turnaround time will allow higher sortie rates during a conflict. The F-22 program costs are under control and are within the Congressionally mandated cost caps for both development and production. This plane utilizes cutting edge technology to ensure our Air Force continues to maintain our nation's superiority in air combat.